

OLD MAN PREFERS PRISON YARD TO FREEDOM

Staff Special.

Wethersfield, Conn., July 8.—Early in the morning the heavy-barred doors of the Connecticut State Penitentiary swung open and an old, white-haired man walked out. The door closed and the old man, John P. Warren, was free.

For 52 years he had worn the metal-buttoned uniform of gray that marked him a life prisoner. When he was 21 he married a young girl of 17. From the first the marriage was unhappy. There were old stories, long since forgotten, stories that linked his young wife's name with that of another suitor. The bridegroom took his girl-wife to a brook one day and held her head under the water until death came.

In December, 1859, John Warren was sentenced to life imprisonment. Then James Buchanan was president, and Abraham Lincoln, a poor, unknown lawyer, riding the circuit in Illinois. The first ocean cable had just been dropped into the Atlantic. The entire country was ablaze over John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. The first oil well was sunk that year. The clouds of an approaching civil war loomed up in the horizon.

As the year 1860 dawned, John Warren entered the prison.

The war was fought, and another also. Mexico overthrew an emperor and a president. Boundaries of nations changed. The telephone, wireless, aeroplanes,

giant liners and 60-miles-an-hour trains arrived. Kings and president came and went. Millions of people were born, lived and died. And all the while, John Warren lived a living death in prison walls.

He petitioned for a pardon 28 times, and then resigned himself to fate. He even grew to like those prison bars, the prison yard and the flower garden back of the warden's house. In that he toiled among the flowers during the last few years. Then, on June 16, the board set him free.

"How does it feel, John, to be free, after a lifetime in prison?" was asked of the old man, as he stood inhaling deep breaths of air, and looking far out over grassy slopes and daisied meadows.

For a long time he did not answer. He could not. He just kept gazing out and out, "stretching" his eyes, as it were, upon the distance which had been denied him ever since he was 22 years old. Then at last he turned:

"How does it feel?" he said; "why it feels so strange, so unusual, it doesn't feel natural. There is too much room out here; I can see too far. It hurts—coming, like this, all at once."

And John Warren, the "lifer," the murderer, rapped at the prison doors that he might go back and work a little while in the rose garden in the prison yard.

"You see, it may be a prison," the stooped old man was saying as he worked among the tangled roses, "but it's just about the only